

**stuff**

## Healthy Rivers open days due to start

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DOMINICO ZAPATA/FAIRFAX NZ

The Waikato River.

The South Waikato District Council is currently working on how it will approach the submission process for the Waikato Regional Council's Healthy Rivers Plan Change.

The plan change is aimed at boosting the health of the Waikato and Waipa rivers and will effect landowners over 2 hectares within the river catchments.

South Waikato mayor Jenny Shattock said it was a serious issue for the South Waikato as 100km of the Waikato river flows through it.

South Waikato District Council group regulatory manager Sharon Robinson said \$50,000 has been set aside for the process of paying for reports, specialists and going through the submission process.

She said the council has until March 2017 to make a formal submission.

"It is national legislation and in my view from a purely planning perspective it is a pragmatic plan change," she said.

"It is going to have a huge impact on our district, there is no argument about that, but we have already made big changes in our District Plan for farmers and it seems to have settled in quite nicely."

She said once the council has made a submission it will have the option of supporting or opposing others.

"They have to advertise submissions so everyone sees everyone else's and if you are a submitter you can support or oppose some of those submissions and then the hearing committee will make any changes and then there is the process of issue the decision," she said.

"At each point we will come back to the council depending on what our budget allows."

A series of public open days are due to start shortly on the proposed change.

"This is a great opportunity for the likes of farmers, growers, businesses and the general community to understand the detail of what's being proposed in this ground-breaking plan," Waikato Regional Council chief executive Vaughan Payne said.

"These open days will help people to make informed submissions that help us reach workable solutions to the complex issue of water quality."

An open day will be held at the Putaruru Hotel on Monday, December 5 from 11am until 3pm.

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